

Research Brief Extended School Day

Question: What does the research say about extending the school day, either starting early or staying later?

Summary of Findings:

There are only a handful of formal studies that examined the impact of changes in school starting time on student learning and behavior. The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota is a leader in this research and identified the impact of changes in school starting times across the school, community and family contexts. They conducted two major studies, one in Minneapolis and the other at several high schools across the United States.

Most of the research on extended school days examined the impact in elementary and middle school settings. Only recently have researchers began to look at the impact of extended days on high schools. With the exception of the studies cited earlier, most of the data about high school extended days is anecdotal, describing the schedule in a single school. The Education Update (May 2007), from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum (ASCD), devoted the publication to a discussion about the impact of lengthening the school day. An Education Sector report in the online edition of Education Week http://www.educationsector.org/research/research_show.htm?doc_id=442238, cautioned that increasing the length of the school day or the school calendar did not assure an improved educational experience for students.

The following factors, drawn from the literature, summarize things to consider when thinking about extending the school day.

Impact of school start time within the school context:

1. In some Minnesota schools SAT scores rose more than 100 points since area schools began starting later.
2. Extending the school day brought about non-instructional benefits on things like school climate.
3. Some research has linked increased sleep for adolescents, and a later start time, to higher grades.

Impact of school start time on the community:

1. There may be a financial impact due to increased staffing and transportation costs.
2. The change may impact participation in after school activities, sport programs, scheduling of appointments, and opportunity for work.

Impact of school start time on families:

1. A later school start time may interfere with parents' work schedule.
2. Parents may need to leave their children unsupervised for longer periods of time.
3. Changing the high school schedule may impact the schedule of elementary and middle school students due to shared transportation. It may require a district solution.
4. The later start time for high school students may compromise their ability to provide child-care for younger siblings prior to parents returning from work. This appears to have less impact on families of students with special needs. They report a significant advantage to a later start time.

Impact of school start time on students:

1. Some students use the later start time to get more sleep while others prefer the early start time which allows ample time for after school activities, work and socializing.
2. At some schools, tardiness was down and the dropout rate declined.

Several school districts from New York to California to Alaska have discussed extending the day, however, no more than a few dozen have implemented such a plan. When implemented little data has been gathered on the impact of change. When considering an extended day, whether an early start, later start or staggered start times including flexible scheduling, schools must consider the impact on families, student employment and other factors. For many schools these considerations may carry greater weight than educational benefits.

Online Resources:

- The article discusses the importance of adequate sleep for adolescents that is defined as the amount necessary for optimal daytime functioning.

Ronald E. Dahl, M.D., The consequences of insufficient sleep for adolescents: Links between sleep and emotional regulation, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 80(05), January 1999, pp. 354-359.

<http://www.nksd.net/parents/StartTimes/The%20Consequences%20of%20Insufficient%20Sleep%20for%20Adolescents.pdf>

- A discussion on the impact that changing a school's starting time has on families and addresses needed alterations in their family routines

Gorden D. Wrobel. (1999). Impact of School Starting Time on Family Life. *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 80, 1999

<http://www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst?docId=5001266720>

- A review of affects of school starting time allowing additional sleep time for teens.

John Diconsiglio. (Feb 11, 2002). Let me sleep! *New York Times Upfront* 134.9.14-17.

http://find.galegroup.com/itx/informark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T003&prodId=ITOF&docId=A83445423&source=gale&srcprod=ITOF&userGroupName=lom_umichanna&version=1.0

- This report presents results of an analysis of student achievement and behavior in a traditional-day and variations of block scheduling

Pisapia, J., Westfall, A.L. (1997). Alternative high school scheduling. Student achievement and behavior. Research report. Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium, Richmond, VA. 38 p. ED411337

www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/22/33/6a.pdf

- A project developed and implemented to increase developmentally appropriate activities such as portfolios, cultural immersion workshops, and music, art, and dance.

Fulmer, E.H. (1992). Implementation of developmentally appropriate activities for school-age youth in the extended day enrichment program. 161 p. ED 367 438

www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/25/6b/6f.pdf

- A discussion of the critical link between students' relation to the school environment and their academic performance, attendance, attitudes, motivation, and post-high school success

Keeping kids connected: How schools and teachers can help all students feel good about school and why that matters. Publication: Oregon Department of Education, 255 Capitol Street NE, Salem, OR 97310-0203; Tel: 503-378-3310, ext. 485; 2000-05-00. Description: 132 p. ED446873
www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/23/84/7c.pdf

- The District of Columbia Junior High School Intensive Care and School Involvement Program (JHSICSIP) was designed to improve achievement and attendance among at-risk students
Tuck, K.D. (1991) Junior high school intensive care and school involvement program (JHSICSIP). Evaluation. School year 1990-91. District of Columbia Public Schools, Washington, D.C. 91 p. ED352569
www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/24/25/18.pdf
- A brief discussion of after-school programs, referred to as “extended-day” programs, which are often operated in school buildings but may be implemented in other community locations.
Schwendiman, J., Fager, J. (1999) After-school programs: Good for kids, good for communities. By request series. Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, OR. 67 pp. ED431844
www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/11/92/20.pdf
- A program called Extended-Day school (EDS) was implemented to help high school students with specific subjects.
The Impact of Participation in an "Extended-Day" Program upon Academic Achievement. 9 p. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South educational research Association (Knoxville, TN, November 1992) ED356562
www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/25/f6/ba.pdf
- A university-operated charter middle school implemented an extended-day format and provides educational and enrichment activities from 8 am until 5 p.m.
Dannis, J., Colombo, M., Sawilowsky, S. (1996). Lessons in school reform: An evaluation of a university-operated Charter Middle School. 66 p. ED427057
www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/11/4a/ef.pdf

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